

June 15, 2007

Contact: Robin Winchell (202) 225-4031

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** - U.S. Representative Charlie Melancon announced today the Town of Grand Isle would receive a \$50,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Development program. The funding will be used to purchase two new patrol cars and other essential equipment to help ensure safe streets and a secure environment for the community.

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**"Local governments work hard to keep their communities are safe for our families, and the federal government should be a partner in those efforts," said Rep. Melancon. "Hurricane Katrina left many small towns like Grand Isle so financially strapped that they are struggling to fund basic needs like public safety. It is encouraging that the Rural Development program is helping Grand Isle and other communities in south Louisiana make ends meet with federal grants like the one I am pleased to announce today."**

Congressman Melancon has supported various programs aimed at helping local governments protect citizens from crime, provide assistance to victims and bring communities together through community policing.

In Congress, he has supported funding for the Edward Byrne Memorial State and Local Law Enforcement Assistance Program, administered through the Justice Assistance Grant (JAG). This program helps local communities work to reduce violent crime, combat drug activity, and provide training for law enforcement.

Working with other members of the Louisiana delegation, Congressman Melancon successfully added \$50 million to the 2007 Emergency Supplemental for Edward Byrne Discretionary Grants to assist Louisiana and other Gulf Coast states in fighting the increase in violent crime resulting from Hurricanes Katrina. The Supplemental was signed into law by the President in May.

Congressman Melancon has also been a strong supporter of the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) program, urging that the COPS program be fully funded and resisting proposed cuts to funding in the program. The COPS program has helped local communities hire law enforcement for the prevention of gang violence, drug crimes, and to help improve communication interoperability for local first responders.

As a member of the House Rural Caucus, Congressman Melancon has highlighted the growing methamphetamine epidemic in rural communities and focused on ways to increase law enforcement, develop strategies for environmental cleanup of meth labs, and provide social services for families who have been devastated by meth abuse. To that end, the Rural Caucus has urged the Bush Administration to focus on rural law enforcement in the National Drug Control Strategy.

Earlier this year, Congressman Melancon co-sponsored the Methamphetamine Remediation Research Act of 2007 (H.R. 365), which overwhelmingly passed the House in February with bipartisan support. This bill will help communities across Louisiana clean up methamphetamine labs and the toxic mess they leave behind. Specifically, the bill charges the Environmental Protection Agency with the development of health-based guidelines to assist state and local authorities in cleaning up former meth lab sites. The dangers of meth continue long after the labs have been shut down because of toxins that can continue to be a hazard for families that live in areas that were once used to produce the drug. In addition to co-sponsoring the legislation, Congressman Melancon also supported it as a member of the Science and Technology Committee, where the bill was first considered.

Congressman Melancon has also been a strong supporter of the Crime Victims Fund which enables local communities to assist victims of domestic abuse, child physical and sexual abuse, drunk driving, sexual assault, elder abuse, robbery, assault, and homicide. This fund also provides for crisis intervention programs and counseling, support groups, shelters, emergency financial assistance for victims of crime.

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